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Accidental diasporas and external 'homelands' in Central and Eastern Europe: past and present

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October 2000

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Founded in 1963 by two prominent Austrians living in exile – the sociologist Paul F. Lazarsfeld and the economist Oskar Morgenstern – with the financial support from the Ford Foundation, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, and the City of Vienna, the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) is the first institution for postgraduate education and research in economics and the social sciences in Austria. The **Political Science Series** presents research done at the Department of Political Science and aims to share "work in progress" before formal publication. It includes papers by the Department's teaching and research staff, visiting professors, graduate students, visiting fellows, and invited participants in seminars, workshops, and conferences. As usual, authors bear full responsibility for the content of their contributions.

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Abstract

This paper attempts a comparison across time and space, focusing on the transborder homeland nationalisms of Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia. Both involve claims to monitor the condition, support the welfare, and protect the rights and interests of external ethnonational kin – persons who are seen as "belonging" to the state in some way despite being residents and citizens of other states. There are superficially striking parallels between the target populations as well – the ethnic Germans stranded in an array of nationalizing successor states after the First World War, and the ethnic Russians (and other Russian-speakers) similarly stranded after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Yet while noting these and other parallels, the paper focuses on key differences between the two cases, and between their broader interwar and contemporary contexts.

Zusammenfassung

Dieses Papier zielt darauf ab, einen Vergleich über Zeit und Raum hinweg anzustellen, wobei grenzüberschreitende "homeland Nationalismen" von Weimar Deutschland und der ehemaligen Sowjet Union untersucht werden. Beide erheben den Anspruch die Entwicklungen zu überwachen, den Wohlstand zu fördern und die Rechte und Interessen von "external ethnonational kin" – Personen, die auf die eine oder andere Art und Weise als "zugehörig" zum Staat gesehen werden, obwohl sie BürgerInnen und EinwohnerInnen anderer Staaten sind – zu schützen. Zumindest auf der Oberfläche ergeben sich auffallende Parallelen auch zwischen den Zielgruppen – den "ethnisch" Deutschen, die nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg in eine Reihe von Nachfolgestaaten verstreut wurden, und den "ethnischen" Russen (und anderen Gruppen, die Russisch sprechen) die auf eine ähnliche Weise nach dem Zerfall der Sowjet Union verstreut wurden. Obwohl dieses Papier diese und andere Parallelitäten aufgreift, werden auch wesentliche Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Fällen und dem jeweiligen breiteren Umfeld analysiert.

Comment

Rogers Brubaker was Visiting Professor at the Department of Political Science of the Institute for Advanced Studies in May 2000.

Contents

Introduction

"Diaspora" has enjoyed a spectacular career recently in the social sciences and humanities.[1] Yet as the term has proliferated, its meaning has become less and less clear. At a minimum, the term involves some notion of dispersion in space and some reference to an actual or imagined homeland, from which the diaspora has become separated, yet towards which it remains oriented in some way – emotionally, imaginatively, or politically. All diasporas, understood in this way, involve a triadic nexus linking diaspora, homeland, and host country or countries.[2] But this nexus can assume many different forms.

In most contemporary discussions, the term "diaspora", together with kindred terms such as "globalization", "transnationalism", and "identity" (especially when this last is understood as fractured, fragmented, multiple, fluid, and so on) evokes the image of a post-modern, uprooted, mobile, deterritorialized world. It suggests, moreover, a post-national world, a world in which the nation-state is no longer an appropriate category of analysis.

The accidental diasporas I address in this paper belong to a very different world. Far from being post-national, this world might better be characterized as post-multinational. It came into being through the disintegration of previously multinational political structures: the breakup of the Habsburg, Romanov, and Ottoman Empires after the First World War, and of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia at the end of the Cold War. These great reconfigurations of political space along national lines represented the apotheosis, not the repudiation, of the principle of the nation-state. They marked the triumph, not the transcendence, of the idea that national and state boundaries should coincide.[3]

In these post-multinational settings, the nexus linking diaspora, homeland, and host country is intensely conflictual, and potentially explosive, in part because of the way in which the "homeland" can become involved. I analyze in this paper the way in which two "homelands" – Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia – have made far-reaching claims to monitor the condition, support the welfare, and protect the rights and interests of "their" respective

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[1] See among many others James Clifford, "Diasporas", *Cultural Anthropology* 9[3] (1994), 302–338; William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", *Diaspora* 1[1] (1991), 83–99; Khachig Tölölyan, "The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface" *Diaspora* 1[1] (1991), 3–7; John Lie, "From International Migration of Transnational Diaspora", *Contemporary Sociology* 24[4] (1995), 303–306; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

[2] Gabriel Sheffer, "A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics" in Sheffer, ed., *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London and Sydney: Croon Helm, 1986), p. 1–15.

[3] The disintegration of the Soviet Union is often casually included in enumerations of phenomena purporting to show a trend towards the weakening or even the "transcendence" of the nation-state. The reverse is more nearly the case. The Soviet Union was itself an attempt – a failed attempt, but an attempt nonetheless – to "transcend" the nation-state by constructing an expressly multinational state, a state populated by dozens of major – and officially recognized – nationalities. Seen from this perspective, the breakup of the Soviet Union involved a move *back to*, rather than *beyond*, the nation-state. The same could be said of the breakup of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

diasporas – the ethnic Germans who were scattered across Eastern Europe in the interwar period, and the ethnic Russians who are scattered across Soviet successor states today.

In the burgeoning discussion of diasporas today, Germans and Russians would be among the last groups to spring to mind. In so far as Germany figures at all in the discussion, it is as a *host* country for labor diasporas, not as a homeland. Germans and Russians exemplify a very different kind of diaspora than that on which recent discussion has focused. They are what I have called in my title "accidental diasporas".

Let me explain what I mean by this term by contrasting accidental diasporas and the more familiar labor diasporas that have been at the center of much recent discussion. First, labor migrant diasporas are constituted by the movement of people across borders, accidental diasporas by the movement of borders across people. Second, migrant diasporas form gradually through countless individual migration trajectories, while accidental diasporas crystallize suddenly following a dramatic – and often traumatic – reconfiguration of political space. Third, labor migrant diasporas are constituted through the voluntary actions of those who comprise them, while accidental diasporas come into being without the participation, and often against the will, of their members. Fourth, labor migrant diasporas tend to be territorially dispersed, and to lack deep roots in their host countries, while accidental diasporas tend to be more concentrated and territorially rooted. Finally, labor migrant diasporas typically remain for some time citizens of their home countries, while members of accidental diasporas are citizens of the countries in which they live.[4]

Of course the contrast between labor migrant diasporas and accidental diasporas is not as sharp in reality as I have drawn it here. Some labor migrations generate new forms of territorial concentration in host countries, while some accidental diasporas – or at least some parts of such diasporas – are territorially dispersed. Some labor migrants have acquired citizenship of their host countries, while some members of accidental diasporas – including most Russians and other Russian speakers in Estonia and Latvia – have not.

Moreover – and this is a point I want to dwell on for a moment – most accidental diasporas, like labor diasporas, have been shaped to some extent by migration. But the migration in question occurred long ago. The German *Drang nach Osten*, for example, began in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as peasant settlements spread eastward beyond the zone of

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[4] There are obviously other kinds of diasporas than the two forms I've contrasted here. Besides the archetypal Jewish diaspora one might mention the classical trading diasporas and their modern-day successors, sometimes known as middleman minorities (Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities", *American Sociological Review* 38 [1973], 583–594); the "mobilized diasporas" conceptualized by John Armstrong ("Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas", *American Political Science Review* 70 [1970]); and the diasporas constituted by the slave trade and by other forms of unfree labor within colonial empires. And of course many other distinctions could be drawn. I have focused on one particular contrast – and have drawn the contrast as sharply as possible – in order to highlight the distinctiveness of the diasporas I address in this paper.

consolidated German settlement, creating a pattern of mixed settlement in the German-Slav borderlands that was to last until the middle of the twentieth century. Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, German colonists were invited to settle in many areas of the Habsburg and Russian empires – notably in Hungary, Transylvania, parts of the former Yugoslavia, and the Volga region of Russia. But even the last of these colonists had been settled for a century and a half by the time their world was turned upside down by the collapse of the great multinational empires. Needless to say, they did not see themselves as "immigrants".

Russians, too, had been moving outward for centuries – mainly eastward and southward – from the original core area of Russian settlement in what is today northwestern Russia. This migration, to be sure, continued under the Soviet regime, and was in part sponsored by the regime.[5] So *some* of those who found themselves abruptly transformed, by the collapse of the Soviet state, from privileged citizens of a great power into precariously situated minorities in precariously existing states had themselves migrated from Russia to one of the non-Russian republics. Yet most belonged to families that had settled permanently – or what they thought was permanently – in the non-Russian republics; in many cases their families had resided there over several generations. And even those who had themselves migrated from Soviet core to periphery had not crossed state borders; rather, they had moved *within* the territory of the Soviet state. This migration was not only legally and politically defined as internal migration, but was psychologically experienced as such. As a result, these migrants too did not think of themselves as "immigrants".

Thus both Germans and Russians were involved in long and gradual processes of outward dispersion from original core areas of settlement. But unlike labor migrant diasporas, they crystallized as diasporas through the sudden, traumatic movement of borders across people as multinational empires shattered into would-be nation-states.

This radical redrawing of the political map, at the beginning of the "short twentieth century"[6] and again at its end, was intended to resolve national conflicts. But as we now know all too well, in both periods it simply reframed and in some cases aggravated such conflicts. The very process of satisfying some national claims generated new ones, largely because almost all of the would-be nation-states that emerged from the rubble of empire contained large and alienated national minorities, many of whom felt themselves to "belong" by ethnocultural nationality, though not by legal citizenship, to a "homeland" state from which they were separated by new – or newly significant – state borders.

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5 See Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (London: Hurst, 1995).

6 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994)

Speaking schematically, we can say that the nationalization of previously multinational political space generated three interlocking forms of nationalism – all quite distinct from the state-seeking nationalisms on which the literature on nationalist politics has focused. The first is what I call the "nationalizing" nationalism of newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states. This involves claims made in the name of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate "owner" of the state, and the state is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation. Yet despite having "its own" state, the core nation is represented as being in a weak or embattled cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This is seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence. This putative discrimination, in turn, it is held to justify the "remedial" or "compensatory" project of using state power to promote the specific interests of the core nation. Examples of such nationalizing states include Poland, Romania, and to a lesser extent Czechoslovakia in the interwar period; and Estonia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Croatia, and of course Serbia today.[7]

Directly challenging these "nationalizing" nationalisms are the transborder nationalisms of what I call "external national homelands". Homeland nationalisms are oriented to putative ethnonational kin who are residents and citizens of other states. They assert states' right – indeed their obligation – to monitor the condition, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, and protect the interests of "their" ethnonational kin in other states. (I place scare quotes around "their" in order to highlight the problematic quality of that seemingly innocent possessive pronoun.) Such claims are typically made, and typically have greatest force and resonance, when the ethnonational kin in question are seen as threatened by the nationalizing policies and practices of the state in which they live. Homeland nationalisms thus arise in direct opposition to and in dynamic interaction with nationalizing nationalisms. Examples of homeland nationalism include Weimar Germany (and, in a very different mode, Nazi Germany), as well as Hungary and Bulgaria, in the interwar period; and (again in sharply differing ways) Russia and Hungary today, as well as Serbia during the early (Croatian) phase of the wars of the Yugoslav succession.

Although analytically distinct, homeland and nationalizing nationalisms are not mutually exclusive. Serbia was a brutally nationalizing state *vis-à-vis* Albanians in Kosovo and an external national homeland *vis-à-vis* Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatia, in turn, was an almost equally brutal nationalizing state *vis-à-vis* Serbs in the Krajina region of Croatia and an external national homeland *vis-à-vis* Croats in the quasi-state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Romania is a nationalizing state *vis-à-vis* Hungarians, a homeland *vis-à-vis* Romanians in Moldova. Russia today is a homeland for transborder Russians, but it is also

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[7] I develop further the notion of "nationalizing state" through a discussion of the interwar Polish case in *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chapter 4.

(potentially) a nationalizing state *vis-à-vis* non-Russian minorities in Russia. Interwar Germany was of course not only an external national homeland for transborder Germans, but a murderously nationalizing state *vis-à-vis* Jews.)

The third characteristic form of post-multinational nationalism is the minority nationalism of the accidental diasporas themselves. Minority nationalist stances involve a self-understanding in specifically "national" rather than merely "ethnic" terms, a demand for state recognition of their distinct ethnocultural nationality, and the assertion of certain collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights. This specifically national, rather than merely ethnic, mode of self-understanding, and the political stance that goes along with it, again distinguished "accidental", post-multinational diasporas from the diasporic formations most widely discussed today. Salient examples include Germans in many Eastern European countries in the interwar period and Hungarian and (in a more problematic sense) Russian minorities today.[8]

There is considerable variation not only *between* these forms of nationalism but *within* each form. For example, the explicit, self-conscious nationalizing policies of Estonia differ markedly from the milder and subtler nationalizing policies and practices characteristic of post-independence Ukraine, and from the on declared but in practice strongly nationalizing practices of Kazakhstan; and all of these differ from the violently homogenizing nationalizing policies and practices of Serbia and Croatia. Or, to take another example, the well-organized, well-financed minority nationalism of Hungarians in Romania today differs markedly from the generally passive, disorganized stance of Russians in most Soviet successor states. Finally, the culturally oriented, carefully modulated homeland nationalism of post-communist Hungary, oriented to Hungarian minorities in neighboring states, differs dramatically from the aggressive, destabilizing homeland nationalism of Serbia in the context of the breakup of Yugoslavia. There is of course striking variation on lower levels of aggregation as well – variation, for example, among and even within differently situated Hungarian minority communities in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine. And there has been great variation over time in Serbian homeland nationalism, Estonian nationalizing nationalism, and so on. As I've argued elsewhere, these forms of nationalism should not be conceived as fixed forms or as "forces" varying only in intensity, but rather as variably configured, dynamically changing interactive "fields", as arenas of struggle between differentiated and competing "stances".[9] Yet despite this heterogeneity and variation at all levels of aggregation, these three forms of nationalism –nationalizing nationalism, homeland

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[8] Like homeland nationalisms, minority nationalisms arise in direct opposition to and in dynamic interaction with nationalizing nationalisms. But minorities are not necessarily aligned with the external national homelands that claim to speak in their name. Hungarian minority politicians in Romania, for example, protested against the "Basic Treaty" signed in 1996 between Hungary and Romania; while Hungarian officials claimed that the treaty would help protect the rights of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, many minority Hungarians contested this and argued that they were "sold out" by a government unsympathetic to their claims for autonomy and collective rights.

[9] *Nationalism Reframed*, Chapter 3.

nationalism, and minority nationalism – are defined in dynamic interaction with one another and directly engendered by the incomplete nationalization of previously multinational political space. For purposes of comparative analysis, this warrants thinking in terms of a single dynamically interactive field of post-multinational nationalisms.

Nationalizing policies, cross-border homeland nationalism, and autonomist minority nationalism are of course not the *only* forms of nationalism that flourished in interwar Central and Eastern Europe or that flourish today. There are a few state-seeking nationalisms – in Kosovo and Chechnya today, for example. There have been instances of traditional "great-power" nationalism. There have been many instances of defensive, protective, populist nationalism, seeking to protect the national economy, language, mores, or cultural patrimony against putative threats from outside. The bearers of such alleged threats are diverse but can include foreign capital, transnational organizations, today for example the International Monetary Fund (IMF), immigrants, powerful foreign cultural influences, and so on. Although related to the nationalizing nationalisms sketched above, such "defensive nationalisms" are analytically distinct from them, for they do not presuppose ethnonational heterogeneity but are found also in ethnically relatively homogeneous countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary today.

However, these other forms of nationalism stand analytically apart from the first three, though they are often intertwined with them in practice. Unlike the first three forms I identified, these additional forms are neither defined in mutual interaction with one another nor directly engendered by the incomplete nationalization of previously multinational political space. For my purposes, the relevant field for comparative analysis is constituted by the dynamically interacting set of nationalizing, homeland, and minority nationalisms.[10]

I attempt here a comparison across time and space, focusing on transborder homeland nationalisms, the least well explored of these three interlocking forms of nationalism. In the interwar period, the transborder homeland nationalisms of Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria collided explosively with the nationalizing nationalisms of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania, giving rise to tensions and crises that were closely bound up with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Seemingly analogous collisions threaten the stability and security of the region today. In some cases they have already led to war. The interplay between the nationalizing

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[10] This field offers rich and largely untapped possibilities for comparative analysis, and one can obviously cut into it analytically in many different ways, at many different levels of aggregation, and using many different strategies of comparative analysis. I present one such cut here, at an extreme macro level of aggregation. In other work in the same broad field, I've been working at lower levels of aggregation, most recently in an ethnographic mode, and at a micro-interactionist level of analysis; so I am certainly not claiming any privileged status for the kind of extreme macro perspective I offer here.

nationalism of Croatia and the homeland nationalism of Serbia (along with the minority nationalism of Croatia's borderland Serbs) led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Similarly, the interplay between the nationalizing nationalism of Azerbaijan and the homeland nationalism of Armenia (initially sparked by the minority nationalism of Karabakh Armenians) led to the war over Nagorno-Karabakh. And of course the recent war over Kosovo was part by the clash between the nationalizing nationalism of Serbia and the minority nationalism of Kosovo Albanians, whose weapons, for the most part, flowed over the border from the neighboring external national homeland of Albania after the near-complete breakdown of state authority there in 1997. Elsewhere too this fault line remains unstable. The nationalizing nationalisms of Romania and Slovakia, *vis-a-vis* their Hungarian minorities, have clashed, though not violently, with the homeland nationalism of Hungary. The nationalizing nationalism of Bulgaria *vis-a-vis* its Turkish minority faces the potential homeland nationalism of neighboring Turkey.

The most important, and seemingly most dangerous, clash along this fault line today is between the nationalizing nationalisms of Soviet successor states and the homeland nationalism of Russia. Serious tensions have already been generated by this clash. The nationalizing policies and politics of Estonia and Latvia, especially their restrictive citizenship policies towards their large Russian minorities, have met with harsh Russian condemnations of "apartheid" and "ethnic cleansing". Chronic tensions between Ukraine and Russia over Russian-dominated Crimea flared up in 1994 when the Crimean Russian leadership declared itself virtually independent of central Ukrainian authority and sought closer ties to Russia. Tensions between Kazakhstan and Russia, too, have increased over the hardening nationalizing policies of the Kazakh regime in the Russian-dominated north. And a limited war broke out in Moldova in summer 1992 between the then strongly nationalizing Moldovan state and the secessionist, Russian-led "Dniester Republic", backed by the Russian 14th army.

Yet despite these tensions, I want to argue that the clash between Russian homeland nationalism and the nationalizing nationalisms of Soviet successor states is less explosive and less dangerous than one might think. I develop this argument by way of a comparison between interwar and contemporary homeland nationalisms, focusing on Weimar Germany and post Soviet Russia.

This is a large and unruly comparison. From a methodological point of view, such a comparison – across large stretches of space, time, and context – cannot pretend to be "controlled".[11] The two cases differ in any number of ways that might plausibly be linked to

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[11] In particular, such comparisons cannot claim to be based on John Stuart Mill's "method of difference". I agree with the criticisms of attempts to use this method advanced, among others, by Stanley Lieberson, "Small *N*'s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases", *Social Forces* 70[2] (1991), 307–320.

the kind of nationalism that interests me. Comparative analysis here affords no surefire method of causal attribution or hypothesis-testing. I compare for the frankly exploratory and preliminary purpose of mapping out a field of investigation and suggesting certain lines of analysis, not for the more conventional purpose of ascertaining the cause of a particular outcome or otherwise testing a hypothesis.

Moreover, the *kind* of comparative analysis I undertake is not the classic kind that Charles Tilly calls "variation-finding" comparison. It is rather what Tilly calls "individualizing" or what I would call "configurational" comparison.[12] My main concern is not with specific differences in outcome – though there are differences in outcome that interest me. It is rather to specify the distinctiveness of the overall configuration of homeland nationalist claims and practices in the interwar period and the present, using Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia as examples. Towards the end of the paper, I make some arguments linking these distinctive configurations to differences in outcome – but I present these as preliminary, speculative lines of interpretation, not as testable propositions.

If comparison isn't of the variation-explaining, hypothesis-testing sort, why do it? What is the point of such "small-N", exploratory, individualizing comparison? This is a large and controversial issue, and I don't want to dwell on it here. I present here a substantive, not a methodological argument. But I want to signal in telegraphic fashion how one might make the case for this type of comparative analysis – not, to be sure, as the *only* legitimate type of comparative analysis, but as *one* legitimate type among others.

I would argue, first, that it is valuable in itself to characterize in rich fashion the individual distinctiveness of important historical configurations. This, I take it, is a crucial part of Weber's epistemological stance. Second, comparative analysis – in which we "think" one case against and by means of another, is an indispensable means of sharpening such characterizations of individual distinctiveness. This holds regardless of whether the comparison is fully "controlled". Again, I take this to be a fundamental Weberian point. Third, such individualizing comparison may suggest lines of analysis for explanatory, variation-finding comparison. Finally, such preliminary individualizing comparison may help us avoid premature, inadequately framed variation-finding comparison. As Tilly put it, we have to "get the history right" before generalizing, if only in order to have any confidence in the soundness of our generalizations.[13]

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[12] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), p.83.

[13] Tilly, p. 79.

Weimar homeland nationalism

Let me turn now to the comparative argument itself.[14] Weimar homeland nationalism built on a model established in Bismarckian and Wilhelmine Germany. Its roots, of course, go further back, reflecting the longstanding incongruence and tension between the imagined community of the nation and the organizational reality of the state in German history. But it was the exclusion of millions of Germans, especially eight million Austro-Germans, from the Prussian-dominated *"kleindeutsch"* nation-state founded in 1871 that first created the possibility of homeland nationalism. This possibility was actualized a few decades later when nationalist pressure groups like the German School Association and the Pan-German League began urging state support for transborder Germans, whose long-privileged position in the Habsburg and Romanov empires was eroding under the challenge of non-German national movements. But movements in late Bismarckian and Wilhelmine Germany to support transborder Germans remained politically weak; the state remained basically indifferent to Germans outside the Reich.

This changed sharply after the First World War, for two reasons. First, the status of ethnic Germans outside Germany changed drastically. The status reversal was perhaps most drastic for the former Reich Germans in the territories ceded to Poland, but it was dramatic for other Germans too, transformed from the *Staatsvolk* or state-bearing nation of the Habsburg Empire or from privileged status group in the Romanov Empire to beleaguered minorities within the much smaller and highly nationalist states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Romania, Yugoslavia, and the Baltics.

Secondly, the Weimar Republic – its basic territorial and institutional parameters deeply contested and lacking legitimacy – could not claim to adequately "embody" the German nation, and therefore could not "contain" nationalism within the institutional and territorial frame of the state – something that the geopolitically prestigious, "successful" Bismarckian and Wilhelmine state had done remarkably well. In Weimar, the category "nation" was detached from the frame of the week and weekly legitimate state, and again identified with an allegedly robust, state-transcending, ethnocultural nation or *Volk*.[15]

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[14] For a more detailed historical account and references to the literature on which the argument rests, see *Nationalism Reframed*, Chapter 5. This chapter closely follows the account given there.

[15] To anticipate: post-Soviet Russia doesn't adequately "contain" "the nation" either – but "nation" is not as central a category as it was in Weimar Germany. Nationhood was strongly institutionalized for *non*-Russians, but, paradoxically, weakly institutionalized for Russians. This was true in the Czarist Empire, and it remained true in the Soviet Union (the main difference between the two was that non-Russian nationhood and nationality were much more strongly institutionalized in the Soviet Union than in the Czarist Empire.) This lack of strong institutionalization of the category "Russian" may help explain the political passivity of Russians in Soviet successor states so far. On this passivity, see Neil Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia* (London: Royd Institute of International Affairs, 1995); on post-Soviet Russian passivity more generally, see also Tim McDaniel, "Social Collapse and Political Passivity: the dual legacy of the crisis of Russian values", (Manuscript, Department of Sociology, UCSD, 1997).

In these new circumstances, homeland nationalism flourished in Weimar civil society. Scores of new *Deutschtum*- or "Germandom"-oriented associations and organizations sprang up, while churches, schools, and other associations organized activities in support of co-nationals abroad.

Civil society homeland nationalism had already existed, though on a much smaller scale, before the war. What was new in Weimar was continuous, high-level state activity on behalf of transborder Germans. Its core was covert financial support for Germans and German organizations abroad, mainly for schools, newspapers, churches, charitable organizations, social and cultural activities, and economic enterprises. This covert financial support was linked to wider foreign policy aims, but in differentiated fashion, as can be seen by comparing Poland and Czechoslovakia, the two most important "targets" of Weimar homeland nationalism.

In both states, Germans comprised territorially concentrated, borderland minority communities, unexpectedly and unwillingly transformed into national minorities, and considering themselves second-class citizens of 3rd-class states. Yet there were three key differences between these cases.

First, Germans of Western Poland had been citizens of Germany until 1919; Germans of Bohemia and Moravia had been citizens of the Habsburg Empire, and had never in modern times been united with Reich Germans in a single state. Second, there was a mass exodus of Germans from Western Poland to Germany after the war, but no large migration of Sudeten Germans. Third, Germany harbored territorial claims against Poland but not against Czechoslovakia. Reflecting these contextual differences, Weimar policies towards transborder Germans in these two neighboring states differed sharply.

Towards Germans in Poland, Weimar policies sought above all to curb large-scale resettlement; this was linked to the longer-term strategic aim of sustaining future revisionist claims. After all, if the mass exodus could not be stemmed, and if no Germans remained in the territories ceded to Poland, it would be more difficult to make future claims for border revision.

Toward Germans in Czechoslovakia, Weimar policy was governed neither by any overriding immediate imperatives nor by clear long-term strategic aims. Yet Weimar support for Germans in Czechoslovakia was not wholly innocent of political design. In a number of ways, Weimar Germany used the question of the status of Sudeten Germans to gain diplomatic leverage in pursuit of other foreign policy aims – especially to promote the interprenetration of the German and Czechoslovak economies as part of a broader aspiration for German economic hegemony in East Central Europe and the Balkans.

The final aspect of Weimar homeland nationalism that I want to signal is that the public side of homeland nationalism was muted – somewhat surprisingly, given the vigor of civil society homeland nationalism and the elaborate program of covert support for German minorities abroad. In post-Soviet Russia, by contrast, homeland nationalism has a much higher profile in public discourse – a point I return to below.

At certain political conjunctures, official homeland nationalist rhetoric did become more salient in Weimar Germany. But even after Germany joined the League of Nations – a step it justified in part by arguing that League membership would give Germany an ideal platform from which to defend the rights of German minorities abroad – Foreign Minister Stresemann was quite cautious about pressing issues connected with transborder Germans, and was much more concerned with other, more classically statist aims.

Weimar homeland nationalism can be characterized in summary as a complex web of political stances, cultural idioms, organizational networks, and transborder social relations. As a *political* phenomenon, homeland nationalism involved a set of "moves" in both domestic and international political arenas. In the domestic arena, these moves were intertwined with party competition; in the interstate arena, they were bound up with – and generally subordinate to – Germany's efforts to recover sovereignty, revise the Treaty of Versailles, and re-establish its position as a Great Power and regional hegemon. Because of this intertwining, Weimar homeland nationalism cannot be understood solely in terms of its own "internal" logic; it cannot be analyzed as an "autonomous" domain of politics.

As a *cultural* phenomenon, Weimar homeland nationalism involved the development and widespread use of a set of idioms of identification with, and responsibility for, transborder Germans. These idioms represented transborder Germans as full members of the German national community or *Volk*. In this discourse, "nation" and "*Volk*" were detached from the frame of the state and redefined in ethnocultural terms. Externally, this granted membership in the nation to transborder Germans; internally, and more fatefully, it denied membership to German Jews. This new *Volk*-oriented discourse of nationhood was articulated and propagated by journalists, publicists, scholars, emigrés from transborder German communities, and activists in Germandom-oriented associations and organizations. These idioms were then appropriated and used by politicians and state officials as well, though to a limited extent, in fragmentary fashion, and without the anti-statist implications of consistently *Volk*-oriented discourse.

As an *organizational* phenomenon, Weimar homeland nationalism involved a network of state agencies, state-controlled (though nominally private) organizations, and voluntary associations. This network provided an extensive array of organized sites for the development of Germandom-oriented expertise and activities. The leading personnel in these organizations and associations were well connected with one another, partly through overlapping memberships and interlocking directorates, partly through joint participation in a

variety of meetings on the affairs of transborder Germans. Together, they constituted an organized "public", a structured, differentiated space of communication, discussion, and debate.

As a *social-relational* phenomenon, finally, Weimar homeland nationalism involved a dense network of cross-border relations and resource flows. These not only linked transborder Germans to Weimar Germany but, perhaps more importantly, contributed to detaching them from the states in which they lived. This restructuring of social networks and relations was most important in the case of the Sudeten Germans. Their networks and relations had long been framed by the Habsburg state but were substantially restructured after its collapse. One aspect of this involved the weakening of Sudeten Germans traditional ties with Vienna and the strengthening of ties with Berlin and Germany. This, in turn, encouraged the Sudeten German elite to look to Germany for solutions to their problems rather than to seek to resolve them within the Czechoslovak state.

The vicissitudes of homeland nationalism after the Nazi seizure of power cannot be addressed here. It is worth noting in passing, however, that the Nazis appropriated the political, cultural, organizational, and social-relational legacy of Weimar homeland nationalism: the calculated deployment of homeland nationalist stances in domestic and international arenas; the *völkisch* idioms of identification with and responsibility for transborder Germans; the network of agencies, organizations, and associations concerned with connationals abroad; and the web of cross-border ties and resource flows. In this sense, one can speak of continuity between Weimar and Nazi homeland nationalism. And there was in fact no abrupt break in the early years of the new regime. Indeed, homeland nationalist themes at first receded from public view as the regime focused on internal consolidation, pursued an initially cautious line in foreign policy, and discouraged the press from focusing on the problems of the German minority in Poland in the wake of the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact of 1934.

Yet the Weimar legacy was radically transformed in the context of the aggressive Nazi foreign policy of the late 1930s (and further transformed in the context of imperialist war and German occupation in the East). The cautious diplomatic use of homeland nationalist themes in Weimar gave way to the blustering fulminations of Hitler in the months preceding the Munich agreement. The *völkisch* discourse of identification with and responsibility for transborder Germans was redefined by the Nazi commitment to establishing a *grossdeutsches* Reich incorporating the entire area of consolidated German settlement. Germandom-oriented associations were ruthlessly *gleichgeschaltet*, subordinated to the state and party apparatus, and the "traditionalist" homeland nationalist leaders, committed to the integrity and autonomy of German minority communities, were displaced by others who did not hesitate to subordinate the concerns of transborder minorities to the imperatives of Reich foreign policy. The web of cross-border ties, finally, permitted Hitler to use the Sudeten Germans, in 1938, as a fifth column in his plan to destroy the Czechoslovak state.

Homeland nationalism in contemporary Russia

I turn now to contemporary Russia. Just as the collapse of the Willhemine, Habsburg, and Romanov empires stranded millions of Germans, so the disintegration of the Soviet Union stranded millions of Russians – indeed far more Russians, some 25 million in all – in an array of successor states. These successor states, like those of the interwar period, are nationalizing states, established as the states of and for particular ethnocultural nations. The new Russian minorities, like Germans in the interwar period, are represented in Russian media and public life as threatened by the nationalizing policies and practices of the successor states. Like Weimar Germany, post-Soviet Russia has suffered what can be construed as a "humiliating" loss not only of territory but of its status as a Great Power. As in Weimar, this has created an opening for political entrepreneurs with a variety of remedial, compensatory, or restorationist political agendas.

There are many further parallels between Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia that bear at least indirectly on homeland nationalism, including deep economic crisis, a new and fragile democratic regime, and geopolitical and economic preponderance *vis-à-vis* neighboring states. These parallels are so superficially striking that they have led some journalists and commentators to speak of "Weimar Russia".

I want to distance myself from this notion, seductive though it is. My comparison of transborder homeland nationalism in Weimar Germany and contemporary Russia does not rest on a belief that these are fundamentally or deeply similar cases. They are *comparable* cases in so far as both belong to the broader universe of post-multinational nationalisms that I sketched above. But precisely their comparability permits me to highlight fundamental differences between the cases, and between the broader interwar and contemporary contexts in which they are situated.

I want to explore three differences in the forms – and formative contexts – of homeland nationalism in the two settings. The first concerns the greater visibility of official Russian homeland nationalism, the second the weakness of civil society homeland nationalism in Russia, and the third the ambiguity of the population targeted by Russian homeland nationalism.

Official Weimar homeland nationalism transpired primarily behind the scenes. Our knowledge of it comes mainly from administrative archives, not from the records of public speech. The homeland nationalism of Weimar civil society was public and visible, but that of the state was largely covert.

Russia, by contrast, has been anything but reticent; its official homeland nationalism has been conspicuously visible. There is no doubt an important covert dimension as well, but

that's another issue; what I want to underscore here is the public and visible dimension of official Russian homeland nationalism, a dimension largely lacking from official Weimar homeland nationalism. Public pronouncements on the right, and the obligation, to protect Russians in the near abroad have become a staple of official Russian discourse, figuring prominently in accounts of Russian foreign policy priorities.

Demonstrative rhetoric has been complemented by an official, public codification of the "fundamental guidelines" of Russian policy *vis-à-vis* "compatriots" in the near abroad, outlining a series of thirty-nine governmental measures. Although the Weimar government adopted a number of similar measures, it did not – and could not – admit to maintaining direct contacts with transborder ethnic Germans, funding their organizations, supporting their economic life, or underwriting their German-language press and educational institutions. This suggests two key differences in the international context of homeland nationalism between the interwar period and the present.

The first difference is normative and institutional. The principle of territorial sovereignty was far more robust in the interwar period. Today, the exclusive claims of the nation-state to internal sovereignty have weakened through the growth of a complex web of cross-border jurisdictions in various policy domains, while transborder concern about the rights of minorities – like transborder concern for human rights is widely seen as more legitimate.[16]

The second salient difference is geopolitical. Russian military, political, and economic preponderance *vis-à-vis* neighboring states is much greater than that of Weimar Germany *vis-à-vis* East Central Europe. This enables Russia to adopt an assertive stance on Russian minorities abroad, while at the same time the weakening of models of sovereignty and the new international legitimacy of transborder concerns with minorities enable it to frame its tough talk in newly legitimate idioms of human and minority rights.

This suggests a further contextual difference. Weimar foreign policy consistently, albeit peacefully, sought changes in territorial borders. Russia, on the other hand – perhaps precisely because of its overwhelming dominance in the region – is not necessarily committed to territorial revision. It's true that the present borders of the Russian Federation are universally seen as arbitrary, as lacking any historical sanction or normative dignity; yet they are not universally regarded as in urgent need of revision. Territorial revision is indeed pushed by certain political entrepreneurs, who claim to find intolerable the existence of

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[16] On international institutionalized legitimacy in the context of an emergent "world polity", see John W. Meyer, "The World Polity and the "Authority of the Nation-State", in George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli, *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1987). On the institutionalized international legitimacy of human rights discourse, see Yasemin Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Ukraine as a separate state or the fact that six million Russians live under Kazakh rule. But border revision lacks the fundamental, unquestioned status it had in Weimar Germany. Why?

I think this reflects on the one hand a decline in the "material" significance of territory – a partial "de-territorialization" and economization of power, and, on the other hand, in seeming opposition to this, the institutional reification and "sacralization" of existing territorial frontiers in international discourse and international organizations.[17] The former makes border changes less necessary; the latter makes them more difficult.

By comparison with the interwar period, borders have become more "inviolable", but they have also become more insignificant. This dual development makes territorial revisionism a costly, "inefficient", and, it could be argued, ultimately unnecessary way to augment state power, even for many of those whose agendas are commonly labeled "neo-imperialist".[18]

On a more speculative note, I suggest there may be a connection between the ubiquitous corruption in post-Soviet Russia and the weakness of classical territorial revisionism. Because it is so ridden with corruption in every domain and at every level, the Russian state may be simply incapable of acting in the coherently statist manner posited by realist international relations theory. Michael Mann has cautioned against overestimating the coherence of putatively unitary states.[19] But if this caution applies, say, too late nineteenth century Germany, how much more forcefully it would apply to contemporary Russia. There is no coherent state in Russia today. In these circumstances, why should state elites in any sector, including the military, pursued changes in territorial borders? Doesn't it make more sense for them to "live and let live", to simply take their cut of whatever deal happens their way?

If the official homeland nationalism of post-Soviet Russia has been more public and visible than that of Weimar Germany, civil society homeland nationalism has been much less visible in the Russian case. This is the second difference I want to underscore. Reportage and commentary on Russians outside Russia has figured prominently in the Russian press. But the core of civil society homeland nationalism in Weimar Germany – the dense and vigorous network of associations concerned with coethnics abroad – has no counterpart in post-Soviet Russia. This reflects of course the general weakness of civil society in Soviet successor

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[17] On the declining significance of territory, see Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

[18] Drawing on Michael Doyle's definition of empire, Ronald Suny argues against conflating an "imperial project" proper, involving the establishment (or re-establishment) of full sovereignty by a center over a distinct and subordinate periphery, with "Great Power hegemony", involving a relation of domination between separate states, and suggests that the latter is more likely in the case of post-Soviet Russia. See his "Ambiguous Categories: States, Empires and Nations", *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11[2] (1995), 193–4.

[19] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II. The rise of classes and nation-states, 1760–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Chapter 3.

states. It also reflects the fact that civil society homeland nationalism in Weimar Germany could build, ideologically and organizationally, on an established pre-war tradition of concern for Germandom abroad. Needless to say, there was no comparable tradition of concern for Russians outside Russia in the Soviet era.

The last difference concerns the much greater ambiguity of the population targeted by Russian homeland nationalism. Weimar homeland nationalism was addressed unambiguously to persons who were German by ethnocultural nationality but not by citizenship.[20] In Russia, by contrast, there is no agreement about how to define the persons in need of Russian "protection". Five terms have been widely used to identify the relevant population. Most clearly paralleling Weimar homeland nationalism are claims to protect *russkie*, that is Russians by ethnocultural nationality. The second term, *rossiiane*, also ordinarily translated as "Russians", in principle construes Russianness in territorial rather than ethnocultural terms, but in practice serves more as a "politically correct" substitute for *russkie* (politically correct because it acknowledges the multiethnic population of Russia).

The third widely used term is *russkoiazychnye*, or Russian-speakers. This term is more expansive, including not only Russians by ethnocultural nationality but others accustomed to living and working in a Russophone environment who might, for this reason, identify politically with Russians in Soviet successor states and join them, for example, in resisting programs of linguistic nationalization.

The fourth term, *sootechestvenniki*, means compatriots, that is people who share a common fatherland (*otechestvo*). In the post-Soviet context, however, this original, clearly political meaning has been overlaid by a melange of criteria based on some combination of descent, ethnicity, past citizenship, and spiritual-cultural orientation. This incongruous blend of legal, ethnographic, and identitarian notions has become the term of choice in official documents, perhaps precisely because of its ambiguity.

The final term is *grazhdane* (citizens). The protection of citizens residing in other states, it would seem, is completely distinct from homeland nationalism, oriented to protecting *non-citizen* co-nationals. Yet the distinction is not so clear-cut in the post-Soviet context. *Grazhdane* is often used metaphorically, as a synonym of *sootechestvenniki*, or compatriots;[21] it is also used, again metaphorically, in connection with the claim that Russia has responsibility for all former Soviet citizens. Moreover, Russia has sought to convert conationals into fellow citizens. It has sought to conclude agreements on dual citizenship

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[20] In practice, to be sure, it was not always evident precisely who belonged to this population, especially in regions (such as Upper Silesia or parts of East Prussia) of fluid ethnocultural identity. In principle, however, everyone agreed that German claims as external national homeland concerned the *Grenz- und Auslandsdeutsche* of Central and Eastern Europe, and that these borderland and foreign Germans were defined by their ethnocultural nationality.

[21] Kolstoe, *Russians*, p. 261.

with other successor states. Failing that, it has begun to grant citizenship on application to individual petitioners from the near abroad, even to those who possess the citizenship of another successor state. Doing so on a large scale would strengthen Russia's jurisdictional claims in the near abroad and provide a convenient pretext for intervention.

The shifting and ambiguous vocabulary of homeland claims enables Russia to play in multiple registers, and to advance multiple and only partly overlapping jurisdictional claims in the near abroad. Through a kind of division of semantic labor, *russkie* provides cultural resonance and emotional power (and is therefore most useful in the context of domestic political competition), while *rossiiane*, *russkoiazychnye*, and *sootechestvenniki* (terms entirely foreign to everyday speech, and lacking – with the partial exception of the last – any kind of cultural resonance and emotional power) designate a broader target population and can therefore be used in international context and in official documents to expand Russia's jurisdictional claims in the near abroad (and to represent those claims as transcending a narrow ethnic interest in protecting ethnic Russians). An expansive politics of citizenship, finally, enables Russia to combine the traditional (and from the point of view of international law more legitimate) rhetoric of protecting citizens in other states with homeland nationalist claims to protect noncitizen co-nationals. This opportunistic use of multiple idioms is further evinced in the somewhat incongruous marriage of a vocabulary of human rights to that of homeland nationalism, as in the frequent claim that Russia must protect the human rights of (ethnic) Russians in the near abroad.

Conclusion

Weimar homeland nationalism, I suggested above, was a complex web of political stances, cultural idioms, organizational networks, and transborder social relations. Russian homeland nationalism can also be regarded in this way. As a *political* phenomenon, homeland nationalism has been more salient, in both domestic and interstate contexts, in post-Soviet Russia than in Weimar Germany. Pronouncements on homeland nationalist themes have been more central to both governmental and oppositional political discourse, and to domestic political competition, than was the case in Weimar Germany. Like Weimar homeland nationalism, Russian homeland nationalism is doubly "intertwined" – both with domestic political competition and with efforts to consolidate Russian hegemony in the near abroad. In both domestic and interstate contexts, homeland nationalist stances have been deployed instrumentally, as a calculated means to other ends. But again as in Weimar, this instrumental exploitation of homeland nationalist stances has occurred against the background of taken-for-granted shared understandings concerning the plight of Russians in the near abroad and the obligation of the Russian state to do something on their behalf.

The dual embeddedness of homeland nationalism, as a political phenomenon, in wider domestic and interstate political contexts, means that it lacks its own autonomous logic and dynamic. As a political phenomenon, homeland nationalism is a set of moves, a set of stances, a family of related discursive claims – but the "game" in which these moves are activated, in which they pay off, or fail to pay off, is not any autonomous game of homeland politics, but rather the wider domestic and interstate "games". The "value" or appropriateness of a homeland stance or move depends on the rules of the game and the resources possessed by competing players. In general, the greater international legitimacy and institutionalization of cross-border concern with minorities makes homeland nationalist "moves" – claims to support transborder minorities – more appropriate and useful as political "moves" than they were in the interwar period.

As a *cultural idiom*, Russian homeland nationalism has been much more uncertain, ambiguous, and fluctuating than its Weimar counterpart. Weimar homeland nationalist discourse could build on the *grossdeutsch*, pre-unification tradition of the mid-nineteenth century and on the tradition of concern for Germans in the Habsburg and Romanov territories that developed in the late Bismarckian and Wilhelmine eras. Because of the lack of a comparable tradition in Russia, homeland nationalist discourse has had to be assembled by "bricolage" from various available and legitimate cultural "scraps". Lacking indigenous roots, it has had to be cobbled together from a variety of discursive traditions: from "classical" homeland nationalism, from the legal rhetoric of diplomatic protection of citizens in other states, from human rights discourse, from the vocabulary of great power politics, from the rhetoric of post-imperial responsibility. As a result, the discourse has been multivocal and opportunistic, playing on multiple registers, and lacking consistency. The ambiguous and partly incongruous vocabulary for identifying the targets of homeland nationalist claims is but one indicator of this.

As an *organizational* phenomenon, Russian homeland nationalism lacks the strong associational base in civil society that characterized Weimar homeland nationalism; the network of organizations concerned with Russians in the near abroad is therefore much more state-centered.

As a *social-relational* phenomenon, finally, Russian homeland nationalism, like its Weimar counterpart, involves the cultivation and maintenance of cross-border relations and the provision of a flow of cross-border resources. The process of organizing resource flows and reconstituting networks and relations disrupted by the breakup of the Soviet Union is still incipient; and too little is known at present to make substantive claims about it. In the long run, however, the political disposition of Russian and Russophone minorities in the successor states – in particular, the degree to which and manner in which they look to Russia for solutions to their problems, rather than work them out within the frame of the successor states – will be significantly shaped by these relations and resource flows, and on

the degrees and forms of integration with Russia (and of detachment from successor state contexts) that they generate.

In comparing Weimar Germany and post Soviet Russia, I've at the same time been making a broader comparison between the contexts and forms of homeland nationalism in the interwar period and the post-communist present. I want to come back to this broader comparison in conclusion.

The inter-state system, I think, can "handle" the cross-border claims of homeland nationalism in a manner that simply wasn't available in the interwar period. Then, the model of state sovereignty was much more robust. Precisely for this reason, borders were not sacralized and reified to the extent they are now. Because sovereignty was more absolute, it was more urgent, more compelling, to "get the borders right". Because the principle of *cuis regio eius natio* was so entrenched, because it was assumed that states could do whatever they wanted to nationalize their territories, then it was seen as a more grievous problem if minorities were "misclassified", assigned, as it were, to the "wrong" state. Now, when minorities are seen is being in "the wrong state", this usually means the wrong status, the wrong condition, not the wrong side of the territorial border.

I am deliberately over stating this point. It's easy to think of exceptions and countervailing tendencies. But I do think that the logic of inter-state relations and of what John Meyer has called the "world polity" does make it possible to accommodate homeland nationalism today in a way that was not possible in the interwar period. This does not make me an optimist about Russia or the former Soviet Union. Far from it. But among the many grave problems facing the region, it seems to me, the danger of an aggressive Russian homeland nationalism is not as great as one might think.

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